

Roosevelt Island
Operating Corporation

ROOSEVELT ISLAND NEWS

Community, Identity, Conversations & Innovations

Issue 14: April, 2023

From the President's Desk:

Dear Roosevelt Island Community:

The busy warm months are upon us here on Roosevelt Island. Spring is in the air, the cherry blossoms have bloomed, and we feel this beautiful season of new life is the perfect time for us to relaunch our Community Newsletter. 2023 is off to a fast start here on the island, and with so much more on tap we wanted to make sure we were talking directly to the community about all the incredible things happening. This April marks my seven-year anniversary at RIOC, making me the second longest tenured executive in the corporations 39-year existence. I am also proud of being the second Black President and CEO in RIOC's history. In that time, I've seen remarkable growth across this great island, and we have much more planned in the coming months and years that will further accentuate all the wonderful things Roosevelt Island has to offer.

To that end, we're making a concerted effort here at RIOC to increase engagement and awareness of the projects we're working on. In addition to restarting the newsletter, we've also launched a new series of public meetings designed to foster a healthy dialogue around island issues, are developing our first ever "Community Events Calendar" on the RIOC website, and are working to highlight a lot of the exciting programming and people who make this island truly unique through our different communications channels. Fostering better communication with the community is also being prioritized by RIOC, as we are working to establish a new Constituent Services Department that will work directly with the island residents to handle RIOC related issues. Our office also looks forward to re-starting our regular check-ins with our local elected officials' offices to ensure that we tackle all of Roosevelt Island's challenges together.

If you don't already, I encourage you to follow RIOC on Twitter (@RIOCny) Instagram and Facebook (@RooseveltIslandNY) for all our community alerts and updates (and if you just want to see some beautiful shots of the island, you can find those there, too).

Looking ahead, 2023 figures to be a truly exciting year for the Roosevelt Island community. The multi-million-dollar renovation to Sportspark is going to be transformative, providing residents with state-of-the-art facilities the likes of which we've never had before on the island. I can't wait for you to see the inside of the facility in-person; from the pool to the basketball court, to the fitness center and locker rooms, everything looks incredible. We here at RIOC who have worked many long hours on this project feel confident you're going to love working out and spending time there. We also heard you loud and clear when it came to Sportspark membership costs, and we've adjusted our pricing to ensure access and affordability are centered in our new plans. Inflationary effects have hit Roosevelt Island families hard, and we here at RIOC are not immune to the rising costs impacting our operations.

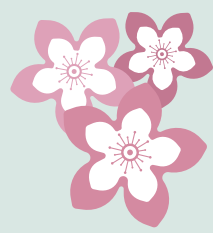
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Shelton J. Haynes, President & CEO
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation



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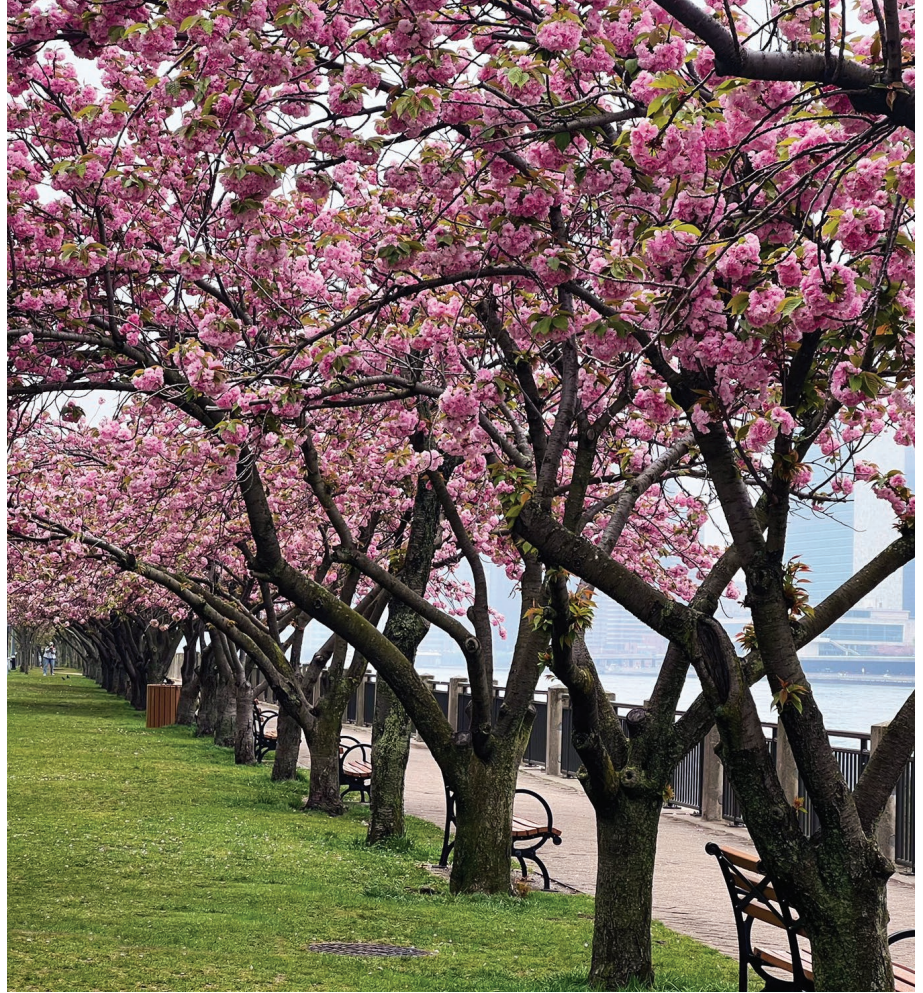
WHAT'S HAPPENING



- **RIOC's annual "Earth Love Day"** celebration took place April 22 on Meditation Lawn and Blackwell Plaza and was a great success! RIOC would like to thank all of the wonderful community groups for their participation, and all of the island residents who came out to enjoy the festivities!
- Our next **Public Safety Department Community Engagement Meeting** will take place on Tuesday, May 2nd at 6PM at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.
- The next **RIOC Board of Directors Meeting** is scheduled for May 25th



- Reminder: **The Farmers Market** has returned to its spring/summer location at Good Shepherd Plaza every Saturday from 9AM to 2:30PM.



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While prices at Sportspark and Motorgate simply must rise in order to adequately maintain the facilities, we will do everything in our power now and in the future to keep these increases as low as possible.

Building up our island infrastructure through major capital projects has always been a priority for me as President and CEO. In addition to Sportspark, RIOC is working on major efforts to rehabilitate our roadways, redesign Blackwell Park, and install new pickleball courts for residents to enjoy. All these important initiatives figure prominently into our 2023 plans. I also remain laser focused on maintaining the history and natural beauty of Roosevelt Island, as well as the high quality of life for island residents.

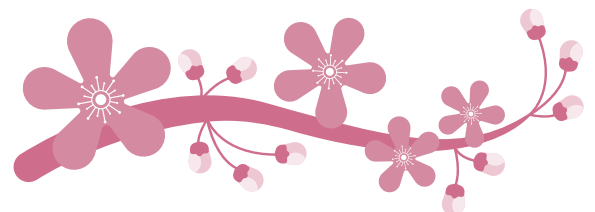
But running an entire island is hard work, and I'd be remiss if I didn't take a moment to recognize the rest of my outstanding team at RIOC, who day in and day out do all they can to make this island great. I am humbled and honored to work with such an extraordinary group of people, who care so deeply about doing their jobs at the highest level, and I want to publicly thank them for their effort and commitment to our shared vision.

And let me also thank you, the Roosevelt Island community, for your continued support. It's not always easy, and the challenges we face can sometimes feel overwhelming. But by working together we've managed to accomplish some truly remarkable things over the course of my tenure here, and I believe strongly that the best is still to come for all of us living, working, and playing on Roosevelt Island.

So, let's keep going, together!

Warm Regards,

Shelton J. Haynes
President & CEO





EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Inspector Suarez

Title: Inspector

Department: Public Safety

RIOC Employee Since: January 4th, 1993

Areas of Responsibility: I Oversee all uniform operations of the Public Safety Force, including Public Safety Officers, Sergeants, Lieutenants, Detectives, Youth Officers, and Crossing Guard. I also perform a broad variety of administrative support functions, coordinate the Scheduling and Payroll of all uniformed officers and supervisors, assist in administering management policies, rules and regulations in the field, and administer annual in-house training to the uniform members, in addition to serving as the department's statistician.

How did you first get started with PSD?

December of 1992; I was an NYPD Auxiliary officer at the 114th. While waiting for my rollcall assignment, a fellow auxiliary and Public Safety Department officer advised me that she had been called for the 911 operator position and therefore a vacancy would be available with PSD.

What does a typical day look like for you in your capacity as Inspector?

Every day is different, so it's difficult to explain what a typical day would be like. You never know what surprises may come your way. Some days you are just following a routine, and the next thing you know, you have numerous issues to solve. The one thing I do know is that at the end of my tour, I leave with a smile and a sense of pride in what I have accomplished that day.

You're celebrating your 30th year here, congratulations! Are there any special Roosevelt Island moments or people in particular that stand out to you over that time?

I have had many, many, many special moments and fond memories. Each day coming to work is a great day for me. I really believe that I have the best job in the world. I really look forward to coming into work, interacting with the residents, merchants and my fellow RIOC employee. I have had the honor to work with great people, and those that have left us will always be remembered. I'm still very fortunate to have the best professional family anyone could wish for.

How do you think the Island has changed over the past 30 years?

Definitely for the better. Thirty years ago, although a beautiful Island, it didn't have as many wonderful things as it does today. This beautiful Oasis would not be what it is today if the RIOC Administration wasn't so involved with the beautification of the Island.

When you to look back on your time at RIOC, what will you be most proud of and how will you hope to have positively impacted both PSD and the community?

Over the years the Public Safety Department has trained and prepare many fine young men and women for careers in numerous law enforcement agencies, mostly within the NYPD. I'm proud to say that many members which have left our department are doing very well in the law enforcement department they chose. That fact that many started their law enforcement careers with us makes me very proud.



OFFICER OF THE MONTH

Steven Cohen

Officer Steven Cohen is a diligent and tenured officer who aims to provide the residents of Roosevelt Island with the best possible service. Over his time at PSD, Officer Cohen has built a good rapport with the young and elderly which allows him to diffuse and mediate in difficult situations. Officer Cohen has a wide breadth of knowledge and experience allowing him to handle various tasks efficiently. Officer Cohen is also quick to react and takes appropriate action when needed.

On March 9th at approximately 2:50PM Officer Cohen was approached by a woman claiming her boyfriend was verbally abusing her inside 559 Main Street. Officer Cohen quickly responded and requested additional units knowing the situation could become volatile. Officer Cohen attempted to calm the male down and managed to buy enough time for Lt. Hazelwood and Sgt. Afgan to respond. The male attempted to flee but was quickly apprehended for disorderly conduct. While unknown at the time, the male possessed a firearm. Officer Cohen's initial response and quick thinking allowed for the apprehension of the male and was vital to removing an illegal firearm off the streets of New York.

Officer Cohen provided a good example of how an officer should act and carry themselves while on duty. Officer Cohen was named officer of the month for his dedication and exemplary work ethic.



COMMUNITY LEADER

Kristi Towey
Executive Director:
Main Street Theatre and
Dance Alliance

What would you say is your favorite thing about living on Roosevelt Island?

I moved a lot as a young child. My father was in the army and retired when I was in middle school. Growing up on and near military bases, you had friends from all over the country. I have now lived on Roosevelt Island longer than any other place and it is definitely home for me. It's hard to narrow down one favorite thing. The first thing that comes to mind is how diverse our island is, and the small "hometown" feel within that. I love learning about other cultures and connecting with individuals and families from all over. It reminds me of living on/near military bases. I love walking into PS/IS 217 to see the hall of flags representing the countries of students that attend or attended school there. I also love being surrounded by water. There is something very peaceful and calming about looking out over the water with the city in the background. Last but not least, I love how the arts world is thriving on the island. It is a hidden gem with so much creativity and exciting opportunities. Roosevelt Island is a very special place and I consider myself very lucky to live and work here.

Over the years, how have you seen the island change?

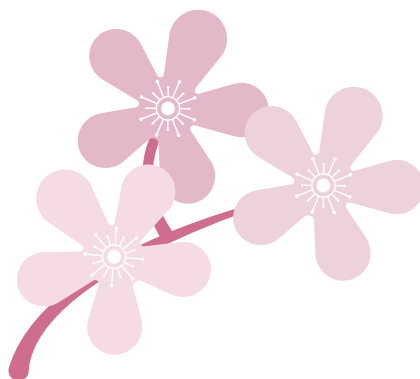
I've lived on the island now for almost 24 years and my husband's family moved here in the late 70's. I have heard many stories from him and have witnessed a lot of change myself during this time. I would say most of what I have seen stems from the island population almost doubling since the time I first moved here. This brought more businesses and other wonderful additions like Four Freedoms Park, Cornell Tech, and the new NY Public Library space. With all the changes in population and development, I am grateful we still have protected park areas. It is something that I feel is very important for our community. We need our green spaces and fields to play, gather, rest, and enjoy our surroundings. It connects us to one another. It also saved my sanity during the pandemic. I am concerned though that due to these changes many people are being priced off the island.

How would you describe your role within the Roosevelt Island community?

To be a creative connector. My goal, along with my team, is to provide everyone in our community with a creative outlet through the performing arts. This could be at MSTDA, at a local community event, within schools on the island or collaborating with other organizations, individuals and businesses. The performing arts are such a vital part of a community. They improve the mental, physical and social health of individuals and neighborhoods through self-discovery and freedom of expression. These connections are an important role of MSTDA and me as the Executive Director.

Can you tell us a little bit about some of the programming that's currently happening at the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance?

First, I want to say that our programs are for ALL AGES & ABILITIES and we offer SCHOLARSHIP in all programs! It is a common misconception that our program is for children only, but we have a number of adult classes in dance, drama, musical theatre and fitness; and, everything we offer is scholarship eligible. We are currently in our winter and spring semester that ends in the beginning of June. Next will be our summer classes and musical theatre camps. We offer multiple dance techniques, capoeira, Zumba, Pilates, Music Together®, and theatre. We also offer private voice, instrument and audition prep for all ages. Our newest additions to the program are our company hip hop and jazz dance classes and LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) drama and public speaking classes. Company dance is for students who wish to take their training to the next level and possibly pursue dance in their future. MSTDA is proud to be the first privately registered theatre in NYC to offer LAMDA classes and certification exams in partnership with Shine Dramatic Arts. During school breaks and summer, we offer theatre intensive camps that incorporate all aspects of musical theatre. Our unique Make-A-Musical Camp in the summer allows students to become the writers, composers and creative team learning all that goes into creating a new work. Coming up, our children's theatre (3rd-7th grade) will perform "Legally Blonde Jr." the musical May 19-22, dancers will perform in a dance concert on June 3rd, and our teen theatre will perform "Disaster!" the musical June 9-11. We just closed a sold out weekend of shows, "The Prom", with our adult musical theatre on March 3-5 and we had our first ever company dance showcase on March 26th. Our website is a great source for schedules, class descriptions and upcoming shows.



What's the most rewarding part of your work?

To see a student grow in confidence and accomplish something new. We have an incredible team of teachers and staff. Our main goal collectively is to give each student a safe, supportive space to discover/express themselves, grow individually and try something new with confidence. There is no greater reward than witnessing that. Dr. Katherine Grimm said this about her experience watching her patients at MSTDA: "What we want to create for children are safety nets, places where children can build up their resilience, self-esteem, feel loved, and feel wanted. It has been amazing for me to see some of my patients who I knew had experienced trauma or neglect in their biological home, really emerge on stage at MSTDA. I can't tell you how important this is. MSTDA is like another family. It's more than about performing, it's about belonging. It's about people telling you that you did a great job." I couldn't say it better.

In honor of Women's History Month, what women throughout history have inspired you to make positive impacts on the Roosevelt Island community?

This is a difficult one because I have had so many inspirational women in my life that shaped who I am today and how I relate to my community. I think of my dance teacher growing up, Andrea Freed Levenson, who lovingly guided me as a dancer, leader, mentor and member of a community. I think of my professor in college, Dr. Nancy Bolden, who opened my eyes to the possibility of connecting dance to all areas of my life, not just physical. My mom, Fran Hutchinson, who stressed the importance of community service and giving back. Did I mention I'm the baby of 8 children?!! I had the honor of taking a dance class in college led by Judith Jamison, the first African

American woman to direct a major modern dance company at Alvin Ailey. Her presence was larger than life and she was my height, 5'10". That is rare for a female in the dance world. She encouraged me to dance big and be proud of my height in dance. She has been an inspiration to me both in dance and personally. She inspires me to open my heart to all the possibilities in life. "Learn the craft of knowing how to open your heart and to turn on your creativity. There's a light inside of you." - Judith Jamison.

How do you see your efforts to improve the community making lasting changes on the island and within the community?

I am a quote person if you haven't noticed yet. "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." - Harry Truman. This is one of my favorite quotes and a daily reminder of what is important to me in my work. Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance has been around for 40 years. I am just a tiny part of the efforts and impact this organization has had on Roosevelt Island and continues to make. None of my efforts over the last seven years would be possible without the amazing team of people who are right beside me at MSTDA and those before me who dedicated themselves to the organization. They all help make it happen. The performing arts will always make lasting changes within the areas they serve. It connects people on a very personal level, preserves history, tells stories, educates, provides creative outlets, and contributes to the vibrancy of a community. With the support of the community, MSTDA will continue to provide a service that impacts many, adapts and serves all. I look forward to seeing what's in store for MSTDA and Roosevelt Island together.



MEET THE RIOCI TEAM

Aida Morales Chief of Staff to the President & CEO

Aida Morales serves as Chief of Staff (COS) of Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOCI). Morales plans and directs all administrative, financial, and operational activities for the President & CEO. She organizes and prioritizes critical issues and required information to facilitate efficient decision-making, all to ensure the smooth operation of RIOCI.

Morales possesses over 12 years of operational and management experience. Before joining RIOCI in 2018, Morales served at Bilingual Care Inc. as the Committee of Preschool Special Education Evaluations Coordinator. While at Bilingual Care, she was responsible for overseeing the evaluation process while guiding and advocating for enrolled families to ensure a smooth process for their child, from the evaluation stage and throughout service delivery.

Morales started her tenure at RIOCI in 2018 as an Executive Assistant to the President/CEO. Subsequently, she was promoted to Chief of Staff in 2021.

Morales holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Lehman College.

PROJECT UPDATES

LIGHTHOUSE – Roosevelt Island Lighthouse Restoration Recognized for Outstanding Work



The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's \$3.1 million restoration of the Roosevelt Island Lighthouse was recently recognized by the New York Landmarks Conservancy as one of their Lucy G. Moses 2022 Preservation Project Award honorees for its outstanding work in maintaining and preserving the historic structure, originally built in 1872. The 50-foot-tall lighthouse had deteriorated significantly over many decades and was in desperate need of upgrades. Scope of work for the project included brick, stone, and window removal, door restoration, and significant modifications to the Lighthouse lantern and observation deck.



L:R Samuel Harris, Project Architect; Thomas Fenniman, Thomas Fenniman Architects; Prince Shah, Director of Capital Projects & Planning; Gretchen Robinson, Vice President & General Counsel

The Roosevelt Island Lighthouse was also recognized by the Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, which gave its 2023 Rehabilitation Award to the project in appreciation of RIOC's "thoughtful and meticulously detailed preservation work." Said RIOC President and CEO Shelton Haynes, "It is very rewarding to see all the hard work that was put into restoring the Roosevelt Island Lighthouse Tower get the recognition it deserves from some of New York's most storied organizations."

FIRST OF NEWLY DEVELOPED PSD MEETINGS HELD



On Tuesday, April 4th the Roosevelt Island Public Safety Department (PSD) hosted its first "PSD Community Engagement Meeting" in conjunction with the New York City Police Department. The event, held in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (543 Main Street), was open to the general public and focused exclusively on matters of public safety on the island. Attendees included representatives from local elected officials, leaders from the business community, property owners and management, RIOC representatives, island residents and other area stakeholders. The meeting was the first of many new community engagement events designed to foster a robust dialogue around all the issues that matter to the Roosevelt Island community. The RIOC Team would like to thank all the stakeholders who took time out of their busy schedules to attend, and we look forward to continuing the conversation on public safety at our next PSD meeting on May 2nd!

PROJECT UPDATES



SPORTSPARK RENOVATION NEARS CONCLUSION

Finishing touches to the multi-year, \$12 million renovation of SportsPark are currently being made and RIOC has shared some stunning new photos of the soon to be reopened facility. The highly anticipated project includes many significant upgrades to SportsPark, including a new state-of-the-art fitness center; a new pool; a beautiful new basketball gymnasium; new locker rooms, restrooms, and showers; a new group fitness studio; a recreational play area; renovated common areas; new HVAC and lighting; an upgraded reception check-in system and so much more! Opening in MAY! Event details to come!



PROJECT UPDATES



YOUTH CENTER RECEIVES IMPORTANT DESIGNATION

This past January, the Roosevelt Island Youth Center officially obtained its New York State School Age Child Care (SACC) license, a designation that will allow the center to engage in new, high-quality programming and take off-island cultural enrichment field trips to further broaden the horizons of youth center attendees. The license also allows the Youth Center to apply for additional city, state, and private grants of up to \$1 million for new programs. Currently, the Roosevelt Island Youth Center offers an eclectic array of programming designed to stimulate and educate young minds, including podcasting, film production, chess, photography, science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM), sports, music production, gardening, culinary, yoga, and biking. Enrollment at the Youth Center is free of charge to island families.



COMING SOON: COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR ON RIOC'S WEBSITE

When the community speaks, RIOC listens. We've heard from all corners of the island about the need for a dedicated community calendar of events, and RIOC President & CEO Shelton Haynes was proud to announce the launch of this new calendar, scheduled to debut on the RIOC website in late April. Residents, businesses, organizations and community groups interested in promoting their events to the public can now email events@rioc.ny.gov with the following information for inclusion to the calendar: A short synopsis of the event; where the event will take place; what date and time the event will be happening; and an optional graphic or flyer relating to the event.



PICKLEBALL COURT ANNOUNCED FOR ROOSEVELT ISLAND

In addition to the community calendar, Roosevelt Island residents have also been clamoring for the hottest outdoor activity in NYC, pickleball. In response, President and CEO Shelton Haynes announced the development of new pickleball courts behind Sportspark with a \$100,000 investment. The new courts will be opening in May; more details to come!

PROJECT UPDATES



MTA POSTPONES 63RD STREET TRACK REPLACEMENT PROJECT THAT WILL AFFECT F-LINE SERVICE

The MTA has decided to postpone scheduled track work at the 63rd Street station that would have significantly impacted F-Line service for island residents. The postponement will be several months, at a minimum. From the MTA: “Last month we informed you that our critical state of good repair track work would begin May 1, 2023, and proceed in three consecutive phases through October 2023. In order to provide the most robust alternative service possible while this work takes place, we are coordinating closely with a concurrent project to upgrade the signal system along the Queens Boulevard Line to Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) and are reevaluating the start date and overall schedule of the direct

fixation track work. As we revise the track work schedule, we must also coordinate with several other projects along the Queens Boulevard Line and other subway lines. Therefore, at this time we do not have a final revised schedule for the 63rd Street line track work. However, we can share that it will not start before July 1, 2023, and due to other scheduling factors, the start may be pushed to 2024. We will have more information in the coming weeks with details on the final revised schedule and corresponding service plan with planned start date.”

MTA OMNY/TRAM UPDATE

The MTA also provided an update on the long-awaited installation of OMNY for Tram riders, saying the service should be available towards the end of Q2/early Q3 (early summer) 2023. RIOC will continue to monitor this progress closely.



PAVED SURFACES REHABILITATION PROJECT

In January, RIOC announced next steps in its Roadways and Paved Surfaces Capital Project, a major island initiative to rehabilitate the roadways and paved surfaces around Roosevelt Island. The corporation conducted a traffic data collection survey on bus and tram ridership that was open to input from all island residents. The goal of the project is to improve transit on the island, while working to improve and maintain critical transportation infrastructure.



PHASE 2 OF BLACKWELL PARK REDESIGN UNDERWAY

It was announced in January that the design kick-off for phase 2 of the Blackwell Park redesign was underway, and a community engagement meeting was held on January 27th to discuss the RIOC vision for the redesign with the community. A community survey was also conducted on the redesign to gain feedback on the plans. RIOC received 387 responses to the survey from island residents.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

To celebrate Women's History Month, we asked some of the female leaders in RIOC what advice or words of encouragement they would give to their younger selves if they could:

"The advice I'd give to myself is to keep believing in yourself no matter what, and actively take criticism to be a stronger, open-minded individual."

AMANDA DOMINGUEZ
Communications Assistant



"Always embrace and celebrate who you are and who you are becoming. Life is not easy, and it will test you, but you are so capable of accomplishing anything you set your mind to. Hold close those who love and appreciate you."

STEPHANIE PATINO
Clerk, Public Safety Department



"Dear younger me: try to stop worrying so much. HAVE FUN! Smile more and worry less. Celebrate your victories in life ... even the small ones. Blessings are coming your way – It will be alright."

AIDA MORALES
Chief of Staff



"Do your best to live in the moment. You are so loved, and life is too short. Enjoy the time you have with the people you love the most."

MEG MCCABE
Special Assistant, Operations



"To my younger self, I would say not to be afraid of the big plans life has to offer. Enjoy life, be kind, and most importantly, be yourself."

NOEMI BISNAUTH
Payroll & Benefits Manager



“The grass grows where you water it. Be aware and intentional about how energy and effort is spent. Do not be so hard on yourself. Be reflective, resilient, but not unrealistically harsh.”

AMY FIRESTEIN
Procurement Manager



“Always, always, always believe in yourself; if you don’t, then who will? Keep your head high, keep your chin up, and most importantly, keep smiling because life’s a beautiful thing and there’s so much to smile about.”

TAJUNA SHARPE
AVP Administration & Human Resources



“You are incredibly loved and supported by family and friends that love you. Always be confident, kind, and open minded about the possibilities of what you will accomplish if you put your mind to it.”

GRETCHEN ROBINSON
General Counsel



“Life will challenge you every step of the way but remember, you are stronger and smarter than you think and will overcome whatever is put in your way. Always lead with kindness and laughter. Also, you are right, Velveeta is the best mac and cheese out there!”

MARY C. CUNNEEN
Acting Chief Operating Officer



“Life can be so beautiful, and at the same time, so hard. But you are strong enough to get through it all. Don’t grow up too fast. Slow down and be patient. There is so much that God has planned for you.”

ANA MEDINA
Director, Youth Center



YOUTH CENTER HIGHLIGHTS



On March 23rd the Roosevelt Island Youth Center celebrated Women's History Month by hosting a Q&A panel with some of RIOC's women in leadership. Included in the panel were RIOC Chief of Staff Aida Morales; VP and General Counsel Gretchen Robinson; acting COO Mary Cunneen; PSD Inspector Estrella Suarez; AVP of Administration Tajuna Sharpe; PSD Captain Wanda Coleman; and Youth Center Director

Ana Medina. Led by the host, Tween Counselor Sydneta McCurdy, the panelists shared stories and anecdotes about their professional journeys, how they've all risen in their respective careers, and offered advice and guidance to the next generation of leaders here on Roosevelt Island.



To mark Read Across America Day, the Youth Center hosted a reading party, book "tasting," and played some fun silent library games. Led by Youth Counselors Martine Moss and Zaire Williams, the program was designed to promote literacy in a fun and engaging way for Youth Center attendees.

With this being a nationally recognized event, the Youth Center featured several globally acclaimed Dr. Seuss books read by several RIOC employees, including Chief of Staff Aida Morales, acting COO Mary Cunneen, AVP of Administration Tajuna Sharpe, Director of Public Safety & Chief Kevin Brown, and Grounds Manager Thomas Imperati.



In celebration of Black History Month, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's Youth Center hosted its 2nd Annual "Jazzy Jam Session" on February 28th. During the session, participants explored jazz music and art through the Harlem Renaissance era with hands on activities, and learned about some of the modern-day trailblazers who are revolutionizing the musical landscape. Led by Youth Center Coordinator Steven Ayala, the youth explored their artistic gifts by painting canvases accompanied by the melodic vibes and sounds of jazz music from some of the greatest African American instrumentalists of all time. With this event being a staple of the Youth Center, RIOC President Shelton J. Haynes, AVP of Administration Tajuna Sharpe, and PSD Chief Kevin Brown joined the Youth Center participants for the event and shared some of their influential stories in connection to Black History Month and the arts.

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